Romani anthem

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"Gelem, Gelem" (IPA: [ˈd͡ʒelem ˈd͡ʒelem]; lit. 'I Went, I Went'),[a] also known as **"Opre Roma!"** (lit. 'Upward, Roma!'), is a traditional song composed by Žarko Jovanović, often used as the anthem of the Romani people. The title has been adapted in many countries by local Roma to match their native orthography and spoken dialect of the Romani language.

In an interview with reporter Mike Kalezić, Jovanović himself titled the song "Opre Roma".[1]

Gelem, Gelem

English: 'I Went, I Went'

Ethnic anthem of the Romani people

Also known as	"Opre Roma!" (English: 'Up, Roma!')
Lyrics	Žarko Jovanović, 1949
Music	Žarko Jovanović, 1949
Adopted	1971

History [edit]

After experiencing firsthand the incarceration of Roma during the Porajmos (the Romani Holocaust of World War II) in the Independent State of Croatia, Jovanović later composed the lyrics of "Gelem, Gelem" and set them to a traditional melody in 1949. The song was first adopted by delegates of the first World Romani Congress held in 1971.[2]

Lyrics [edit]

In Europe, depending on the country of the settlers, the text can be written in several variations of the Romani alphabet. In other countries, Romani can be written in the Greek, Cyrillic, Arabic, Armenian, and Hebrew alphabets. Some orthographic conventions emerged over the centuries since then, but there is currently no single standard orthography used by both scholars and native speakers.

There are many variations to the lyrics, as the song has lyrics in the several regional dialects of Romani.

Anglo-Romani	English translation
Gelem, gelem, loongonay dromensa Maladilem backtalay Romensa A Romalay, catar toomen awen, Ay tzarentza backtalay dromensa?	I went, I went on long roads I met happy Roma O Roma, where do you come from, With tents happy on the road?
Ah, Romalen! Ah, Chawalen!	O Roma, O Romani youths!
Sas wie man yeck barie familia, Moodardas la ay Calie Legia Awen mansa sa loomniacay Roma, Ky pootardilay ay Romanay droma Acay wriama, oostie Rom acana, Amen cootasa misto Ky cayrasa	I once had a great family, The Black Legion murdered them Come with me, Roma from all the world For the Roma, roads have opened Now is the time, rise up Roma now, We will rise high if we act
Ah, Romalen! Ah, Chawalen!	O Roma, O Romani youths!
Pooter Dewla lay parnay woodara Tay shy dickaw ky sie may manoosha Palay ca jaw loongonay dromendar Thy ca phiraw backtalay Romensa	Open, God, White doors So I can see where are my people. Come back to tour the roads And walk with happy Roma
Ah, Romalen! Ah, Chawalen!	O Roma, O Romani youths!
Opray Roma, sie backt acana Awen mansa sa loomniacay Roma O calo mooey thy ay calay yacka Camaw len sar ay calay dracka	Up, Romani people! Now is the time Come with me, Roma from all the world Dark face and dark eyes, I want them like dark grapes
Ah, Romalen! Ah, Chawalen!	O Roma, O Romani youths!

Alternate lyrics [edit]

There are many versions of "Gelem, Gelem", notably those translated by Ronald Lee.[3]

In 2004, the band Vaya Con Dios released an interpretation, with lyrics in French by their singer Dani Klein, with the similar sounding title *Je l'aime, Je l'aime* (IPA: [ʒə lɛm | ʒə lɛm]).

Notes [edit]

a. ^ Also spelt **"Jelem Jelem"**, **"Djelem, Djelem"**, **"Dželem Dželem"** or **"Dzhelem Dzhelem"**; see Romani alphabets.

References [edit]

1. ^ Kalezić, Mike. "Ministar na koljenima". prvi tamburaški online magazine. Retrieved 30 September 2012.
2. ^ "Romani Nationalism, Flag and Anthem". *www.grthmlondon.org.uk*. Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month London. Archived from the original on 27 May 2015. Retrieved 13 November 2012.
3. ^ "Djelem Djelem [Romani] song lyrics". Dunav.org. Archived from the original on 2012-11-27. (archived 2 April 2007).

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See also [edit]

- Romani nationalism

External links [edit]

- bANDİSTA - Kara Çocuk Raksı (Turkish version)
- Kosovo Roma Oral History Project - Roma Culture: Music

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